Felling of Trees in Madhya Pradesh

2148. SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has drawn to the large scale felling of trees in the forests of Madhya Pradesh which continued unabated during the last one year especially in the districts like Durg;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the steps so far taken by the State Government have not yielded the desired results; if so, whether Central Government propose to take more effective and more stringent measures including taking over of forest management; and

(d) whether Government propose to impose a total ban on the felling of trees in the country to stop further deforestation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) to (d) The details will be collected from the State Government and placed on the Table of the House.

Seizure of Hashish in Bombay

2149. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item which appeared in the 'Hindustan Times' dated the 28th February, 1988 to the effect that 2.5 tonnes of hashish valued at Rs. 25 crores has been seized in Bombay;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken against the persons apprehended in this connection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Presumably, the question relates to the two seizures made by the officers of the Customs Preventive Collectorate, Bombay on the nights of 26th and 27th February, 1988. In one case, from 2 storage places in Mazagaon, Bombay, 741 kgs. of hashish, 1.7 kgs. of heroin and 48 pieces of snake skins packed in 15 packages out of a total of 88 packages recovered. The remaining packages were found to contain handicrafts like flower vases, ash-tray, plastic school bags and sports goods like carrom boards, etc.

In the other case, from a godown at Kharodi village, Bombay, 21 polythene packages containing 1,718 kgs. of hashish of reportedly Afghan origin were seized with other goods. Three persons found in the premises have been detained for taking appropriate action under the law.

Refund Racket in Customs duty unearthed in Bombay

2150. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the refund racket in customs duty recently unearthed by the Bombay Customs Collectorate; if so, the *modus operandi* applied to get refunds amounting to lakhs of rupees;

(b) whether Bombay High Court has ordered investigations by the CID and also by the Bar Council regarding the involvement of a noted lawyer, Shri Nitin Kantawala in one of the refund cases;

(c) whether Government will issue instructions to all the Collectorates to investigate such cases in their jurisdiction; and

(d) what other measures Government propose to take to prevent unscrupulous elements from defrauding the exchequer?